

1920.

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Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health


FOR THE

SHERINGHAM

URBAN DISTRICT.

Read at the Council Meeting held on
10th May, 1921.

Bertram A. Watts, Printer, Sheringham.



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Sheringham Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1920.

The Annual Report of a Medical Officer of Health is required under an Order of The Ministry of Health, who, in Circular 66 and Memo. Med. has issued precise instructions for its compilation. It is intended first to bring to light any local consequences of war conditions that may need special attention; and secondly to form a basis for that careful and comprehensive scheme of health developments generally which it is hoped may shortly follow in every locality upon the recent unification in the Ministry of Health of the various central functions in respect of all matters affecting the health of the people. It is suggested that the Council should arrange for the Report to be distributed locally as widely as possible, and should take steps through the local press and otherwise, to bring its contents effectively to the knowledge of the people. One of the main purposes of the compilation of the Report is, that by giving it the widest possible publicity, it shall engender a popular interest in the subject and an enlightened public opinion which shall support the Local Authority in realising its high responsibilities for the health of the area, and in remedying, at the

earliest opportunity, the various defects which the survey may bring to light, whether arising from war conditions or from other causes. Such an increase of public knowledge and interest in these matters may also become an effective means of educating the citizens in the more important conditions of public health, of warning them against particular dangers, and of securing that highly important co-operation and confidence between them and the Health Authority and its staff which is essential to successful health administration.

Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

Population	1901	Census	2364.
„	1911	„	3376.
„	1920	„	3430 (Estimated)

The Urban District of Sheringham is situated upon the north coast of Norfolk, facing north. Its area in acres is about 926. Bounded by the sea on the north and by a low range of wooded hills which fall gently towards the sea for a mile on the south, it adjoins the Erpingham Rural District on three sides, and has on its outskirts such picturesque places as The Roman Camp, Pretty Corner, and the village of Upper Sheringham.

During the summer months visitors, in abundance, resort to Sheringham for the bracing air, fine expanse of sea sands, golf links and scenery.

The population is composed of :

1. Fishermen.
2. Those who let rooms to visitors, and tradesmen.
3. A constantly increasing class of gentry who resort to Sheringham for its natural beauties, its fine golf links, and for the health-giving and preserving properties of its bracing air.

As a health resort in autumn months Sheringham does not meet with the patronage it deserves. For nervous diseases and breakdowns, due to organic diseases or the result of overwork, business worries, or the stress of modern town life, the air of Sheringham is eminently adapted in

autumn and winter. There is that combination of outdoor and indoor recreation which in a pure bracing air cannot fail to be beneficial. Cases of surgical tuberculosis often heal as if by magic. When Medical Officer to the King Convalescent Home (in connection with the London Hospital) it was a rare event to send back a child with a tuberculosis joint with sinuses unhealed.

The soil is porous and after the heaviest rains the roads are dry again in a few hours ; sunshine is abundant, the rainfall is low.

Water. The water of Sheringham is supplied by the Sheringham Gas and Water Company.

The collecting ground, pumping station and reservoirs are situated in Sheringham Woods, about half-a-mile south of the Cromer road. The spot is isolated and wired in, there is no inhabited house in the vicinity, a keeper's cottage in the woods, 300 yards from the collecting ground, is situated on land which falls away from the water supply.

The water is derived :—

(a) From springs situated within the collecting ground. This water is collected in open channels, filtered through gravel to take out coarse sediment and stored in the reservoirs.

(b) From a deep tube well sunk about 300 feet into the chalk. This water is pumped into a reservoir at a higher level to supply by gravitation the higher lying parts of the town. Analysis both chemical and bacteriological shows the water to be of excellent quality for drinking and domestic purposes.

The attention of the Company has been called to two defects in collection and distribution. The method of collection in open channels leads to abundant growth of low forms of animal and vegetable life which, though not harmful, appears as a sediment in the water pipes ; filtration through gravel is not sufficient to remove this. The whole system of collection and filtration is primitive, the channels and springs should be covered to prevent the growth of organic life and the entrance of mud, and an efficient system of filtration adopted.

The present high level reservoir is not sufficiently high to deliver water to the top of the houses in the high lying parts of the town and a new high level reservoir is wanted.

Drainage and Sewerage. The Urban District is sewered throughout with fairly modern sewers, which are satisfactory. The outfall is well below ordinary low water mark in the North Sea.

Closet Accommodation. In the main the district is provided with water closets, there are however about 30 pail closets. At a Meeting of the Sanitary Committee, however, I am pleased to report a resolution was passed that notices are to be served requiring all these to be converted into water closets during the next two years.

Scavenging. The pail closets and dust bins are emptied twice weekly by the Council. The refuse is conveyed by rail in special trucks to a tip in Kelling, where it is at once covered by soil. This method of disposal answers satisfactorily. The tip is an isolated spot and no complaint of nuisance has been received.

There are no dustbins of the fixed receptacle type.

Supervised Premises. There is no Common Lodging House, Scheduled Offensive Trade or Slaughter House in the District.

Dairies, Cowsheds, Milk Shops, There are 19 registered Milk Sellers, Dairies and Cowsheds in the District. They have been inspected during the year and found to be in a generally satisfactory condition.

Bye-laws are adopted and enforced.

Schools. The Council Schools are modern in construction and sanitary in design and equipment.

The Schools are visited immediately upon the occurrence of any outbreak of disease, close co-operation with the Head Teachers is maintained both with and without the intervention of the School Medical Officer.

Food.

The milk supply is good and sufficient. It is either produced in the district or imported mainly from the adjoining district of Erpingham.

Other Foods. The meat killed locally is of excellent quality. The foreign meat is also of good quality.

There is no food manufactory in the district worthy of comment.

There has been no case of food poisoning brought to my notice during the year.

One Slaughter House in the district is well conducted. There has been no complaint during the year.

The scheme for a Public Abattoir stands in abeyance at present upon the grounds of cost.

The Bakehouses are satisfactory.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, 1918. Three cases have been assisted during the year 1920, at a total cost of £5 19s. 8d.

Prevalence and Control over Infectious Disease.

There were 29 notifications of Infectious Disease during the year.

17 cases of Diphtheria, of which 2 died.

5 cases of Scarlet Fever, all mild and quite unconnected.

6 cases of Pneumonia.

1 case of Erysipelas.

In addition there were four notifications of Tuberculosis, excluding two cases where the notification was incorrect.

The 17 cases of Diphtheria notified amounted to a small epidemic, an unusual experience for Sheringham as regards this disease, where there had hardly been as many cases in the previous 17 years.

The first case occurred upon August 24th, the middle of the season, at a house in the Beeston Road. The Schools were closed for the holidays, and its origin could not be traced. The next case occurred on September 4th, in the same neighbourhood, but apparently, I think in reality, not directly connected with the former case. The next notification, September 10th, was a visitor's child known to have had Diphtheria previously to coming to Sheringham, in whom the routine swab taken before returning to School was found to be positive. I convinced myself that this case was outside the series.

Further notifications were received as follows:—September 10th, two ; September 22nd, October 5th, three ; October 6th, October 8th, two ; October 15th, October 30th, November 8th, November 22nd, November 24th.

By September 10th it became apparent that the disease was confined to one area each side of the Beeston Road, and in one class of house, and it remained to find the common factor. Close enquiry and severe cross-examination entirely failed to connect any two cases. The milk supplies were from three different dairies ; enquiry failed to obtain the history of any illness in the milkers or dairy staff. The cause was obviously not water or drains. Upon investigating the food question there was some evidence that sweets and chocolate might be involved, and it was found that in the first nine cases the household bread came from the same source.

The latter was investigated minutely and I came to the conclusion that it was nothing more than a coincidence which was not unlikely to occur as the bread shop was situated in the affected area and did a large business with the type of household where the cases were occurring.

From the first it was recognised that the cause might be a carrier, but the Schools being closed made it a matter of difficulty to know where to look for the culprit.

I began by enquiring from each case for rumours of sore throats, sore places or sore noses in their playfellows and acquaintances, investigated each rumour, and after a good many failures was rewarded on October 5th by coming across a typical case of Nasal Diphtheria in a child living in the area who was acquainted with all the families infected, and who I have little doubt had played with them or been in contact with them sufficiently to infect the cases notified up to this and those who were notified shortly afterwards, e.g., 1 case on October 6th and 2 on October 8th, and 1 case on October 15th where I am sure the whole family had had the disease earlier.

After this only four more cases were notified, on October 30th, November 8th, 22nd and 24th, the last two in the same family.

I feel sure many more cases occurred than were notified, and it is probable that the November cases were connected with such.

A strict watch was kept upon the Schools after the term began, and many swabs were taken in suspicious cases during the epidemic.

The want of an Isolation Hospital was felt acutely.

Sanitary Administration.

The Staff is composed of the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector.

Chemical and Bacteriological examinations in cases of infectious disease, including Tuberculosis, are paid for by the Council. Medical Practitioners are encouraged to utilise these facilities in all suspicious cases. Anti-toxin is supplied free in necessitous cases. A stock is kept by the Medical Officer of Health and by the chemists.

Housing.

The Council has instructed the Surveyor to prepare a plan of a pair of semi-detached houses, and to inform the Housing Commissioner that the Council is prepared to build 20 of these houses if the Commissioner will guarantee that it will only cost the Council a penny rate if the houses are let at £15 per annum.

Vital Statistics.

	Death Rate per 1000 population.	Birth Rate per 1000 population.	Rates per 1000 Births.	
			Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years	Total Deaths under 1 year.
England and Wales, 1920	12·4	25·4	8·3	80
Sheringham U.D. 1917 ...	16·00	12·2		111·11
1918	14·75	14·58		78·45
1919 ...	17·45	13·03	16·66	110·60
1920 ...	12·82	22·44		38·96

Population for Birth Rate	3430
Population for Death Rate	3430

The above rates are eminently satisfactory. The Death Rate has fallen from 17·45 to 12·82 per 1000. The Birth Rate has risen from 13·03 to 22·44 per 1000. There has been no death from Diarrhoea under 2 years. The Infant Mortality Rate has decreased from 110·60 to 38·96 deaths of infants under 1 year per 1000 births.

Causes of Death in Sheringham U.D., 1920.

Causes of Death.	Males.	Females.
All Causes	21	23
Diphtheria and Croup	1	1
Influenza	1	
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	1	2
Tuberculous meningitis	1	
Other Tuberculous Diseases	3	
Cancer, malignant disease	3	4
Rheumatic Fever		1
Organic Heart Disease		3
Bronchitis		1
Pneumonia (all forms)	1	
Nephritis and Bright's Disease		1
Congenital Debility, etc.	1	2
Suicide	1	1
Other defined diseases	8	7
Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age.		
Total	1	2
Illegitimate		
Total Births	38	39
Legitimate	35	39
Illegitimate	3	39
Population (for Births and Deaths)	3430	

I am, Sirs,

Your obedient Servant,

J. E. LINNELL, B.A., M.B.,

B.C. Cantab, D.P.H., Lond.

SURVEYOR'S AND INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1920.

BUILDINGS.

Plans approved	....	....	....	....	35
New Houses	....	....	....	18	
Additions	....	....	....	11	
Smoke House	....	....	....	1	
Garages	....	....	....	2	
Garage and Show Room	....	....	....	1	
Workshops and Stores	....	....	....	2	
Temporary Buildings	....	....	....	....	6
Total No. of Dwelling Houses in District	....	....	....	....	1084
Houses completed	....	....	....	....	6
Additions completed	....	....	....	....	9
Garages completed	....	....	....	....	2
Smoke House completed	....	....	....	....	1
Workshops and Stores	....	....	....	....	2
W.C's. to new houses	....	....	....	....	9
do. to existing houses	....	....	....	....	3
Pails converted to W.C's.	....	....	....	....	4
New Drains connected to Sewer	....	....	....	....	7
do. do. to existing drains	....	....	....	....	6
Houses commenced but not completed	....	....	....	....	11
Additions, &c., do. do	....	....	....	....	3
Houses not commenced for which plans approved	....	....	....	....	4
Dilapidations repaired	....	....	....	....	3
-Obstructions removed	....	....	....	....	2

DRAINS AND SEWERS.

Common Lane 9in. sewer commenced.					
Drains repaired, re-laid and cleaned	....	....	....	....	30
Drains tested and found sound	....	....	....	....	13
Number of Pail Closets	....	....	....	....	385
Number of Water Closets	....	....	....	....	1015
Number of Waste Water Closets	....	....	....	....	50

NUISANCES ABATED.

Notices Served (nuisances generally abated on receipt of letter)	....	....	....	....	28
Accumulations of offensive rubbish, &c.	....	....	....	....	13
New Closet Pails provided	....	....	....	....	25
New Dust Bins provided	....	....	....	....	14

PREMISES DISINFECTED.

Scarlet Fever	....	....	....	....	....	9
Tuberculosis	....	....	....	....	....	3
Cancer	....	....	....	....	....	2
Measles	....	....	....	....	....	1
Diphtheria	....	....	....	....	....	13
Bedding disinfected	....	....	....	....	....	15

FOOD CONDEMNED.

Cow	....	....	....	....	....	1
Lambs	....	....	....	....	....	7
Sheep	....	....	....	....	....	7
Box Mackerel	....	....	....	....	....	1
Box Butter	....	....	....	....	....	1

Sewers are flushed once a week in winter and twice a week in summer, and dead ends from water cart in addition.

Registered Milk Sellers	....	....	....	....	11
Dairies and Milkshops	....	....	....	....	5
Cowsheds	....	....	....	....	3

REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Population	....	....	....	....	3430
Complaints received	....	....	....	....	25
Nuisances detected without complaint	....	....	....	....	112
Nuisances abated	....	....	....	....	137
Notices served, Statutory 23	}	....	....	....	137
„ Informal 109					
Bakehouses inspected	....	....	....	....	4
Dairies and Milkshops inspected	....	....	....	....	9
Cowsheds inspected	....	....	....	....	2
Workshops, &c., inspected	....	....	....	....	41
Filthy Houses cleansed	....	....	....	....	1
Houses disinfected	....	....	....	....	1
Bedding, &c., disinfected	....	....	....	....	1
Houses erected for which water laid on	....	....	....	....	6
Certificates granted	....	....	....	....	6
Houses, &c., connected to sewer	....	....	....	....	7
New Drains connected to existing	....	....	....	....	6
Earth Closets converted to W.C's.	....	....	....	....	4
Animals improperly kept removed	....	....	....	....	3

Registered Workshops.

Bakehouses	....	....	....	....	4
Wheelwrights and Blacksmiths	....	....	....	....	4
Golf Clubs	....	....	....	....	1
Joinery	....	....	....	....	3
Gas Works	....	....	....	....	1
Water Works	....	....	....	....	1
Dressmakers and Milliners	....	....	....	....	7
Boat Builders	....	....	....	....	2
Laundries	....	....	....	....	4
Garages, Motor and Cycles	....	....	....	....	4
Boot Makers	....	....	....	....	5
Cabinet Makers	....	....	....	....	2
Saddler	....	....	....	....	1
Tailor	....	....	....	....	1
Total No. on Register					40

Inspection of Factories, Workshops & Workplaces.

		Inspections.	Written Notices.
Workshops	....	55	4

Defects found in Factories, Workshops & Workplaces.

	Found.	Remedied.
Want of Cleanliness—Lime Whiting	4	4

HOUSING CONDITIONS.**Statistics**

Year ended 31st December, 1920.

Estimated Population	....	....	....	3340
General Death Rate	....	....	12·82 per 1000	
Death Rate from Tuberculosis				
Infantile Mortality	....	....	38·96 per 1000 births	
Number of Dwelling Houses of all classes		....	1048	
Number of Working Class Dwelling Houses		....	720	
Number of New Working Class Houses erected		....	2	
			(under £20)	
Total number of Dwelling Houses inspected for defects under Public Health or Housing Acts				25

Number of Dwelling Houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ....	....	....	25
Number of Dwelling Houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs....	....		5
Number of Dwelling Houses which were rendered fit by Owners ....	....	....	5

Rents of Houses.

£10 and under	...	....	252
£11—£20 ....	....	....	468
£21—£30 ....	....	....	126
£31—£40 ....	....	....	78
£41—£70 ....	....	....	80
£71 and over	....	....	44
			<hr/> 1048
Houses in course of erection			<hr/> 11

The Urban District Council propose to commence erection of 6 houses, part of 20 under Housing Scheme.

